

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Lieutenant Colonel Sir Frederick Thomas SARGOOD, KCMG

(1834-1903)

Sargood was a successful businessman and held the Legislative Council seat of South Yarra 1882-1901. On 13 November 1883, he joined the Service-Berry ministry as Victoria's first minister for defence. He long had an interest in the subject, having joined the Victorian Volunteer Artillery in 1859 as a private, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. As minister, Sargood backed an energetic program to build up the Victorian navy, local fortifications and armament supplies, especially during the Russian war scare in March-May 1885.

His task of organising the change-over from volunteer to paid militia forces involved him in controversy with the new commandant, Colonel Disney, who believed he should report direct to the governor. Sargood quickly disabused him and in 1885 appointed Major General M. F. Downes as departmental secretary. This issue forced the Colonial Office to accept local control of defence.

Many of Sargood's admirers considered the formation of the school cadet corps in 1884 his greatest monument. Commissioner of water-supply from April 1884 to 18 February 1886, he again held the defence portfolio, together with public instruction, in the Munro government in 1890-92 and for three months under Turner in 1894, when he was also vice-president of the Board of Land and Works. Awarded CMG in 1885 he became KCMG in 1890.

He was a great supporter of Federation and was elected to the first Senate in 1901.

He was also renowned as a generous host at his exuberant and famous mansion, Rippon Lea, designed by J. Lee, built in 1868-69 and set in superb gardens and grounds complete with miniature rifle range.

Sargood died suddenly on 2 January 1903.

Source: John Rickard, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 6, pp.87-88.

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sargood-sir-frederick-thomas-4538>